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The situation in the Middle East

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Sixty-ninth year

Letter dated 30 July 2014 from the representatives of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Iran (Islamic Republic of) to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

In our capacity as Co-Chairs of the Joint Coordination Committee (the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China), we have the honour to transmit to you the communiqué of the Joint Coordination Committee of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China calling for an end to the Israeli military aggression against the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip (see annex).

We should be grateful if the present letter could be circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under agenda item 35, and of the Security Council.

(*Signed*) Sacha **Llorentty Soliz**
Permanent Representative of the
Plurinational State of Bolivia to the United Nations
and Chair of the Group of 77

(*Signed*) Gholam Hossein **Dehghani**
Ambassador and Chargé d'affaires a.i.
and Chairperson of the Non-Aligned Movement Coordinating Bureau

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Annex to the letter dated 30 July 2014 from the representatives of Bolivia (Plurinational State of) and Iran (Islamic Republic of) to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General and the President of the Security Council

Communiqué of the Non-Aligned Movement and the Group of 77 and China calling for an end to the Israeli military aggression against the Palestinian people, particularly in the Gaza Strip

The members of the Joint Coordination Committee strongly condemn the ongoing military aggression by Israel, the occupying Power, against the Palestinian people in the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem, which has caused high civilian casualties, particularly in the Gaza Strip, where more than 1,000 Palestinians, including hundreds of children, women and elderly persons, have been killed by the Israeli occupying forces, more than 6,000 civilians have been injured, and more than 180,000 civilians have been displaced.

The Committee condemns this wanton killing and injury of Palestinian civilians, including the killing of many families in their entirety, and condemns the massive destruction of homes and vital civilian infrastructure, including water and sanitation networks, compounding the humanitarian crisis and suffering of the 1.8 million Palestinians in Gaza, who have been enduring massive collective punishment under Israel's inhumane eight-year blockade. The Committee expresses grave concern about the deepening humanitarian crisis and calls for the urgent provision of emergency humanitarian assistance to meet the needs of the civilian population.

The Committee strongly condemns all violence against civilians wherever it occurs and urges all parties to respect their obligations under international humanitarian law and international human rights law. The Committee calls on both parties and all concerned regional and international parties to urgently engage in efforts to achieve a durable and fully respected ceasefire to de-escalate this dangerous situation and protect civilian lives.

The Committee condemns the targeting of UNRWA facilities, including schools, by Israel, the occupying Power, which has led to the death of civilians, particularly women and children seeking shelter and safety under the United Nations flag. The Committee calls for an immediate transparent investigation by the United Nations of the bombardment of the UNRWA elementary school in Beit Hanoun in the Gaza Strip on 24 July 2014, in which at least 17 Palestinian civilians were killed, and stresses the imperative need to ensure accountability for such crimes.

The members of the Joint Coordination Committee demand an immediate end to Israel's military aggression against the Palestinian people, and call on the international community, in particular the Security Council, to exert all efforts to bring a halt to Israeli military operations in Gaza and to ensure a sustainable ceasefire, in line with the November 2012 ceasefire. In this regard, the Committee also calls for serious efforts to compel full respect for international humanitarian law and ensure protection for the Palestinian civilian population and calls for the lifting of the Israeli blockade and an end to all measures of collective punishment against the Palestinian civilian population.

The Committee stresses that a firm message must be conveyed to Israel, the occupying Power, to cease its military attacks, as well as all human rights violations, against the Palestinian civilian population in the Gaza Strip and the rest of the Occupied Palestinian Territory, including East Jerusalem. It must be demanded of Israel to abide forthwith by all of its obligations under international law, particularly the Fourth Geneva Convention, and by all relevant United Nations resolutions. The Committee members further stress the need to hold Israel, the occupying Power, accountable for all its breaches of international humanitarian law and human rights violations.

The Committee calls on the Security Council to act immediately to call for and secure a ceasefire, contribute to a de-escalation of the crisis situation on the ground, and salvage the prospects for realizing a just and lasting peace and security, and recognizes the urgent call in this regard made by the Security Council in its presidential statement of 28 July 2014. The Security Council must uphold its Charter duties with an immediate view to saving and protecting innocent civilian lives and averting the further destabilization of the situation, which constitutes a threat to regional and international peace and security, and must adopt a resolution to this effect.

At this time of crisis, the members of the Joint Coordination Committee reaffirm their unwavering support and solidarity to the Palestinian people and their resilient efforts to realize their inalienable rights and legitimate national aspirations for freedom, justice and peace.